

### **REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Upon entry of this Amendment, Claims 1, 3-8, 13, 15-17, 22 and 23 will be pending in the application.

By the present Amendment, independent Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly recite an apparatus for treating municipal sewage system wastewater comprising: means for introducing at least one alkane into the municipal sewage system wastewater; and means for introducing an oxygen-containing gas into the municipal sewage system wastewater. Independent Claim 13 has been amended to recite an apparatus for treating municipal sewage system wastewater comprising: a municipal sewage system wastewater containment vessel; a source of butane and/or propane; a source of an oxygen-containing gas; at least one butane and/or propane injector in flow communication with the source of butane and/or propane and the municipal sewage system wastewater containment vessel; and at least one oxygen-containing gas injector in flow communication with the municipal sewage system wastewater containment vessel. Several of the dependent claims have also been amended to recite “municipal sewage system wastewater” in order to conform with the claims from which they depend. Basis for the “municipal sewage system wastewater” language is provided in the specification, for example, at page 7, paragraphs [0031], [0032] and [0033], as well as original dependent Claim 9.

Claims 1-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Winkler ‘491. According to the Office Action, Winkler ‘491 discloses an apparatus in which a gas cylinder 28 is operatively connected via 31, 33 to a submerged gas diffuser 39 placed near the bottom of a wastewater treatment tank 13. A system of air distribution pipes 27 provides air to the diffusers. It is submitted that Winkler ‘491 does not teach or suggest the presently claimed invention.

Winkler ‘491 discloses an in-situ method of cleaning aeration diffusers by forcing liquid and/or gaseous cleaning fluids through the diffusers. Winkler ‘491 does not teach or suggest the combination of means for introducing at least one alkane into municipal sewage system wastewater, and means for introducing an oxygen-containing gas into the municipal sewage system wastewater as recited in Claim 1. Accordingly, Claim 1, and the claims that depend therefrom, distinguish over Winkler ‘491.

Winkler '491 also fails to teach or suggest an apparatus comprising a combination of a municipal sewage system wastewater containment vessel, a source of butane and/or propane, a source of an oxygen-containing gas, at least one butane and/or propane injector in flow communication with the source of butane and/or propane and the municipal sewage system wastewater containment vessel, and at least one oxygen-containing gas injector in flow communication with the municipal sewage system wastewater containment vessel, as recited in Claim 13. Since Winkler '491 does not teach or suggest this combination of features, Claim 13, and the claims that depend therefrom, are patentable thereover.

Newly added Claim 22, which depends from Claim 1, recites that the at least one alkane comprises propane. Basis for this recitation is provided in the specification, for example, at page 2, paragraph [0009].

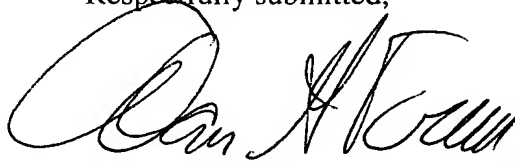
Newly added Claim 23, which depends from Claim 13, recites that the butane and/or propane injector injects propane into the municipal sewage system wastewater containment vessel. Basis for this recitation is provided in the specification, for example, at page 2, paragraph [0009].

An Information Disclosure Statement is submitted herewith. Applicant particularly draws the Examiner's attention to U.S. Patent No. 6,669,846, and Application Serial Nos. 10/308,607 and 10/400,963, all of which are assigned to the assignee of the present application. If deemed necessary by the Examiner, Applicant would consider filing a terminal disclaimer over the 6,669,846 patent, 10/308,607 application and/or 10/400,963 application.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is submitted that Claims 1, 3-8, 13, 15-17, 22 and 23 are patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, an early Notice of Allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

In the event that any outstanding matters remain in connection with this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (412) 263-4340 to discuss such matters.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan G. Towner', with a large, stylized initial 'A'.

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